

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE USE!

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

I once bought a backyard grill. It came in a box and needed some basic assembly. It looked simple enough, so I got my tool kit and went right to work, ignoring the envelope that boldly said, ***Read Instructions BEFORE Assembling!*** Two hours later I was hot, tired and completely frustrated. Why did the legs wobble? Why did the wheels not turn? Finally, in humble despair, I opened the envelope and read the instructions. Amazingly, within 15 minutes the job was complete and everything fit perfectly. We've enjoyed fine barbeque ever since!

God has given each of us a sexual identity. In his goodness he made us male or female and gave us passions and desires that reflect his very image (Genesis 1:26). But what will we do with such a gift? How will we use and direct these urges that daily churn within us? Fortunately, the "Manufacturer" has provided an "Instruction Manual." In the Bible we discover both God's purpose for our gender and his provision for helping us direct our sexual desires into healthy and constructive channels. We ignore these instructions at great peril. Our culture, however, wants to pretend we can practice our sexuality as we see fit. We don't need God or his instructions. For example:

- We've divorced sexuality from procreation. We've developed multiple methods for preventing pregnancy (including abortion!) so that now we have a generation of people who think of sex without relating it to one of its most basic God-ordained purposes: babies!
- We've divorced sexuality from marriage. Many today view sex as a recreational activity, entertainment. Partners get together for fun and amusement rather than to seal a covenant commitment that will last a lifetime.
- We've divorced sexuality from the community. "What I do with my body is none of your business!" is the attitude we so often hear. Really? Is adultery just a private matter? And what about pregnancy? Abortion? Teen sex? Sodomy? Pedophilia? Are these merely "private" concerns? Does not the community have a say in the matter?
- We've divorced sexuality from God. We have reduced sex to animal instincts and biological drives. Like eating and breathing, sex is viewed by many as just another natural bodily function. Really? When did we lose the rapturous awe of the Apostle Paul who looked on human sexuality and could only whisper, *this is a great mystery!* (Ephesians 5:32)

As long as we continue to separate what God has joined together, we will continue to experience frustration, confusion and pain. O Lord, before it's too late, help us to humble ourselves and re-read the instructions you have so graciously provided us!

Pastor Stan